

at his V.S.

LETTER

TO THE HONORABLE

Mr. Horace Walpole, *K*

CONCERNING THE

DISPUTE

BETWEEN

Mr. HUME and Mr. ROUSSEAU.

L O N D O N:

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DETER

TO THE HONORABLE

Mr. Howard

DISP

LETTER

Mr. Thorne and Mr. Thorne



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L E T T E R
T O T H E
Hon. Mr. HORACE WALPOLE.

S I R,

THE simple Enthusiast is a quiet and harmless creature. He sees visions, and he dreams dreams; but he keeps these visions and dreams to himself, and enjoys the comfort of them in silent meditation. The Fanatic is ever restless and turbulent; and, though a dreamer as well as the Enthusiast, is not however content, like him, with what passes within himself, but is impatient to rage and riot abroad: *ὁ μόνον ἐνθεσιᾶν, ἀλλὰ βαλχέειν.* Society must interest itself in favour of his reveries; nor is it too much for their sake, even to disturb the public peace.

Enthusiasm and Fanaticism are, both of them, compounded of Folly and Madness; and, for the latter, if dishonesty and rancor be not of its essence, they are at least consistent with it, and almost always found to tincture it very strongly.

The term *Fanatic* has usually been applied to the Religionist, when disordered, and not in his right mind: may it not, under the same circumstances, suit as well the Philosopher? The Religionist, I know, is supposed to do all for the glory of God; the Philosopher, to act only for the glory of himself. But the difference is trifling; apparent surely, not real. Self at the bottom is the principle of action; and however the one may clamour for Religion, and the other for Virtue (*a*), yet the glory of *himself* is the great object of both. But I will not contend: let the Religionist, if you please, walk first. It would grieve one, that two members of

(*a*) “ Mr. Rousseau is so passionate an admirer of “ *Virtue*, that his eyes always sparkle at the bare “ mention of that word.” So at least he relates of himself. *Account of the Dispute between Mr. Hume and Mr. Rousseau*, p. 63.

So-

Society, so useful and so amiable, should quarrel about precedence.

These reflections owe their birth to the quarrel, which hath arisen between *Mr. Hume* and *Mr. Rousseau*; and they are addressed to you, Sir, because you are supposed to have occasioned it by the flippancy of your wit. I do not believe, that you were even the innocent occasion of this *fracas*. Dark suspicions and tormenting jealousies had plainly occupied the imagination of *Mr. Rousseau*, before your Letter was written; and a quarrel must have happened, if it had *never* been written.

The first intimation of these suspicions from *Mr. Rousseau* himself appears in his letter to *Mr. Hume* of March 22, 1766; wherein we read, as follows. “ The affair
 “ of the carriage is not yet adjusted, because
 “ I know I was imposed on: it is a trifling
 “ fault however, which may be only the
 “ effect of an obliging vanity, unless it
 “ should happen to be repeated. If you
 “ were concerned in it, I would advise you
 “ to give up, once for all, these little im-
 A 3 “ sitions,

“ fitions, which cannot proceed from any
 “ good motive, when converted into snares
 “ for simplicity (b).”

Simplicity ! If *Mr. Rousseau's* be simplicity, it is such a simplicity as the devil assumed, when he tempted our first parent under the form of a serpent. *Milton* describes the beast, as soft, pleasing, undefining, and benevolent, *without* ; but *within* restless, fraudulent, treacherous, and of the most envenomed as well as the most persevering malice.

But what were these *snares* for *simplicity* ? Why truly, *Mr. Rousseau* being mean enough to affect poverty, and yet too proud to be relieved, expedients were sought to serve, without disgusting him ; and, among the rest, this of advertising a chaise at an under-price, contrived by *Mr. Davenport*, and assented to by *Mr. Hume*.

But was not *Mr. Hume*, however well-meaning, too officious ? Was there not something indelicate in these sort of services ?

(b) *Dispute*, p. 14.

and

and was it not natural for *Mr. Rousseau*, to suspect these *obliging* acts, as resulting from *vanity*? They, who ask such questions, do not consider, how extremely distressed *Mr. Rousseau* appeared to *Mr. Hume*. In his letter to *Mr. Clairaut*, of March the 3d, 1765, he implores that gentleman to correct a work, which he is "obliged, he says, to republish for subsistence, *pour avoir du pain*; declares himself overwhelmed with a torrent of misfortunes; and assures him, that this would be doing a very great charity to the most unhappy of men (c)."

Is not this to call out, in effect, for the contributions of charitable and well-disposed persons, to preserve a poor wretch from perishing through want? It is true, this was not the real state of *Mr. Rousseau*; for we find him speaking afterwards of his sufficiency in a strain of triumph: "I did not come over, says he, to beg my bread in England; I brought the means of subsistence with me (d)." But *Mr. Hume* at that time knew nothing of this; and had therefore

(c) *Dispute*, p. 7.

(d) *Dispute*, p. 41.

just reason to say, that “ this affectation of
 “ extreme poverty and distress was a mere
 “ pretence, a petty kind of imposture, which
 “ *Mr. Rousseau* successfully employed to ex-
 “ cite the compassion of the public,” and by
 that means if he could to engross its at-
 tention.

Soon after, Sir, your letter came forth ; in
 which you exhibited this fantastic mortal
 more clearly to view, by giving the outlines
 of his character with much good sense and
 wit. That you should do this with sense
 and wit, I do not wonder ; but I wonder ex-
 tremely, that any man of sense and wit
 should disapprove of your doing this. *Mr.*
D'Alembert says, that “ we ought not to
 “ ridicule the unfortunate, especially when
 “ they have done us no harm (*e*).” You,
 Sir, I dare say, would be far from *ridiculing*
the unfortunate. It is but justice to believe
 this of you ; for you have given to the pub-
 lic many ingenious specimens of yourself, in
 which you appear to be a lover of Virtue,
 as well as of Letters : no small merit surely

(*e*) Dispute, p. 94.

in a man of your rank, and especially in times, when both are despised.

But, after all, was *Mr. Rousseau* really *unfortunate*? Has he not exaggerated matters? With regard to his poverty most certainly he has; and, perhaps, with regard to his persecutions. You seem to have known this; for if I understand you, it is chiefly against this, that your ridicule is directed. You believed, that these exaggerations were the tricks of a *Charlatan*, who wanted the public to talk of nothing but him; and you justly thought, that the gentlest punishment he deserved was to be laughed at a little. It may be that *Mr. Rousseau* had never injured or offended you, *personally*, or as a *private* man: but an author assumes a kind of *public* character; and every man has a right to correct his notions and his manners too, if either the one or the other shall stand in need of correction. *Mr. D'Alembert* is a very respectable personage, but surely has not decided here with his usual accuracy.

But to what purpose dwell on your innocent letter? The grounds of discontent

were laid in *Mr. Rousseau*, and the impulse to quarrel with *Mr. Hume* had doubtless begun to operate, before your letter came to his hands. He seems to have imagined, that, as soon as he arrived at Dover, the English should have been affected, as they were at the *Restoration*, or the landing of the *Prince of Orange*. “ Before I arrived in
 “ England, says he, there was not a nation
 “ in Europe, in which I had a greater reputation — The public papers were full
 “ of encomiums on me — my arrival was
 “ published with triumph — England prided
 “ itself in affording me refuge (e).”

You see, Sir, that the arrival of *Mr. John James Rousseau* was in his view a national concern ; so that it was natural for him to expect, and he plainly did expect, that the eyes, the ears, the thoughts of every individual, should be taken at once from their several occupations and pursuits, and fixed intirely upon him alone. The manner of his reception did by no means answer to these preconceived ideas ; so far from it, that all of a sudden, as he himself relates, “ with-

(e) Dispute, p. 43.

“ out

“ out the least assignable cause, the tone was
 “ changed; and that so speedily and totally,
 “ that of all the caprices of the public never
 “ was known any thing more surprising (*f*).”

However, while he was in London or near it, some visited him out of curiosity, as others did out of vanity; and thus, though greatly disappointed, he was not as yet in any high degree miserable.

Things grew daily from bad to worse; till at length, he says, “ not one of those, “ who had so much praised me in my absence, appeared, now I was present, to “ think even of my existence (*g*).” He flies into the country; still presuming, and most certainly desiring, that the attention of the town might fly thither after him.

Et fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri.

It is true, were a judgment to be formed from *Mr. Rousseau's* declarations, we should of course conclude, that to be buried in solitude was the very thing he wished: for he

(*f*) *Dispute*, p. 43.

(*g*) *Dispute*, p. 45.

speaks of "rural walks, as the only pleasures
 " of his life (b)." "You live and converse
 " with the world," says he to *Mr. Hume*;
 " I with myself in solitude.—I live retired.
 " from the world, I am ignorant of what
 " passes in it.—I am told nothing, and I
 " know only what I feel (i)." The picture,
 you see, Sir, of a poor abject animal, who
 scarcely perceives by Reflection, but only
 knows what he feels by Sensation.

Now nothing can be more unfit to represent the original truly and as it is, than this sort of colouring. So far is *Mr. Rousseau* from desiring *not to know* what is doing in the world, that his own Letters shew him to have been constantly searching the Public Papers and Magazines for intelligence of himself; or, to speak more properly, for puffs to feed his vanity. So far is *Mr. Rousseau* from wishing to live *unknown* and *unregarded*, that a greater cause of misery to him, I am persuaded, does not exist.

"Arriving at this solitary, convenient,
 " and agreeable habitation," says he, "I be-

(b) Dispute, p. 60.

(i) Dispute, p. 29. 34.

" came

" came tranquill, independent: and this
 " seemed to be the wished for moment, when
 " all my misfortunes should have an end.
 " On the contrary, it was now they began;
 " misfortunes more cruel than any I had yet
 " experienced (k)." I verily believe, because
 I so easily conceive, it. He was never per-
 haps in a situation before, where he was so
 little liable to be molested; where he was so
 unnoticed, so altogether left to his own will
 and humor. For the good people of England,
 after the first stare was over, had (as their
 way is) entirely done with him. Far from
 continuing to admire, they had ceased to
 mention him; and, if they had not totally
 forgot, they cared no more about him, than
 if he had been in Swisserland. His misery in-
 creased: your letter appeared (l): it became

(k) Dispute, p. 40. (l) " In this letter,"
 says Mr. Rousseau, " I knew the pen of Mr. D'Alem-
 bert as certainly, as if I had seen him write it. In
 " a moment a ray of light discovered to me the secret
 " cause of that touching and sudden change, which I
 " had observed in the public respecting me; and I
 " saw that the plot, which was put in execution at
 " London, had been laid at Paris." Dispute, p. 58,
 59. Alas! this *ray of light*, darting upon the brain,
 has occasioned many an unhappy mortal, before Mr.
 Rousseau, to see, and hear, and feel too, what never
 existed out of his own imagination.

extreme. He fell into a paroxysm: he raged: and, in short, as sometimes happeneth among wild beasts, he fell upon his Keeper (m). To speak without a figure, he quarrelled with his greatest friend and benefactor *Mr. Hume*, by all accounts the most quiet, the most humane, the most amiable of men; and who in the present case seems only faulty, in having condescended to humor a man, whom it is not possible to oblige: and nothing doubtless but the exceeding humanity of *Mr. Hume*, and his prejudices for *Mr. Rousseau*, could hinder one of his vast penetration from discerning somewhat earlier, than he seems to have done, that *Rousseau* was a savage, whom no offices of kindness could civilize and tame.

The dispute between these gentlemen is now before the public; which seems reasonably well convinced, that *Mr. Hume* is the first man, who was ever obliged to defend himself in form from such a train of ridiculous and groundless imputations. *Mr. Rousseau* really brings them in such a manner, as if he

(m) Je tiens J. J. R.

meant

meant to betray his own cause, and to acquit *Mr. Hume*, while he affects to accuse him. In his letter of June 23, he says, " I thank you for the good offices in matters of interest, which you have used as a mask (*n*)" —for what? truly to do him ill ones. He abounds with such passages as these. In his letter of July 10, after having urged all he could invent against *Mr. Hume*, he says, that " every circumstance of the affair is equally incomprehensible. A conduct such as yours is not in nature: it is a contradiction; and yet it is demonstrable to me (*o*). " Thus the *credo quia impossibile*, which even the Religionist is now grown ashamed of, is at length adopted by the Philosopher.

No man however but *Mr. Rousseau* will be able to perceive the least contradiction. The marks of friendship from *Mr. Hume* to him were, as the French editor observes, the least equivocal, *les moins equivoques* (*p*): they did not consist of *verbiage* and profes-

(*n*) Dispute, p. 30.

(*o*) Dispute, p. 82.

(*p*) Advertisement to Dispute, &c.

sions,

sions, but of true and real services. A *Christian's* faith is generally allowed to be best determined by his works: and what better test can be contrived for the sincerity of a friend? The Methodists indeed are wont to reason otherwise; esteeming all, who contend for Works, as loose in the Faith: and *Mr. Rousseau*, who is certainly a Methodist in Philosophy, seems to have reasoned thus of *Mr. Hume*; else he would never have opposed a series of suppositions, I mean suspicions, of his own against *Mr. Hume* to a series of facts in that gentleman's favor.

But I must not, as I have been given to understand, confine *Mr. Rousseau* altogether to Philosophy. An advocate of his declared, in my hearing, that he was indeed a very good Christian; at least a better than *Mr. Hume*, who, it was feared, is only a Philosopher. Concerning these important points I can neither affirm, nor deny any thing. *Mr. Rousseau* is evidently an heap of inconsistencies and contradictions; so that, his understanding having been undetermined to any systematical or regular way of thinking,

if

if he was not a Christian three months ago, he may be one now. In the mean time I meddle with no man's faith. That affair lies wholly between God and himself; and can be no concern of mine. Yet, were we to judge of Christianity, as exemplified in the conduct of ~~these~~ ^{two} gentlemen, I should make no scruple to say, with *Averroes*, *Sit anima mea cum Philosophis* : for I had rather be such a Philosopher as *Mr. Hume*, than such a Christian as *Mr. Rousseau*.

The French editor seems afraid, Sir, lest this quarrel between Philosophers should bring a scandal upon Philosophy. Not much, I should think, if any at all. Sects and Professions of every kind, Philosophical as well as Religious, have long been too wise to be responsible for individuals. But whatever disgrace it may bring upon the Philosophers, he supposes, that the *Blockheads* will reap from it no small comfort : which, if the numbers of each be rightly estimated, is supposing it to produce more physical good than evil by far. Let us not envy them this consolation : it seems indeed necessary, that they should
some-

sometimes have it : for who can say, what might otherwise happen ? Genii of a superior order might gain too great an ascendancy : they might in time pass for more than Genii : they might be reputed Gods, as *Paul* and *Barnabas* were at *Lystra*, if they did not discover by things of this kind, that they were *men of like passions* with the meanest of their species.

Other reflections more solid may be made, and lessons more useful drawn, from the dispute between these celebrated personages. We may learn from the character of *Mr. Rousseau*, and from his very strange treatment of *Mr. Hume*, to what extravagancies the human mind is capable of being carried, when the humor *atrabilaire* has once thoroughly infected it. A person thus distempered, or rather thus *possessed*, (for is he not a Demoniac ?) is able to conceive any thing. The power of imagination in such a one is creative beyond measure. Existence or Non-existence are precisely to him the same : for he makes no difference at all between facts, on which alone depends the certainty of all
hu-

human information ; I say, between the plainest and most notorious facts, and suppositions the most wild, the most improbable, the most visionary. He overlooks or contemns the former, as non-entities : he builds demonstrations upon the latter. In short, he cannot see what actually is, while he sees intuitively what is not ; and things do or do not exist with him, as they happen to suit his prejudices and passions.

We learn from the same object, that superior abilities, and even shining force of genius, are consistent with great misery in him who possesses them, if his temperament be thoroughly bad. Rigid Philosophy, I know, will not allow this temperament to be within the reach of even Alteratives ; but Christianity teaches, that it may be greatly corrected and amended, if not cured. And it is surprising that *Mr. Rousseau*, who is so good a Christian, should not have labored this point more abundantly ; as his whole happiness seems to have depended upon it.

From the strange and unexpected situation of *Mr. Hume* it appears, that an active benevolence

violence may sometimes expose a man to inconveniencies and troubles. I have often wondered, why men, as they grow old, should grow less benevolent; (for I take the fact to be incontestable) but this and similar instances have helped me to account for it. And sorry am I to say it; but, alas! Human nature, thou can'st not bear to be too much obliged. It is dangerous, I have been told, with regard to the Great Ones; and if there be not an equal danger in obliging the Little Ones, it is not from the want of will, but the want of power, to hurt their benefactors. At least so it seems from the behaviour of *Mr. Rousseau*.

It appears again, that the utmost prudence and goodness are no security against the basest and most injurious usage, when a man's ill stars shall have connected him with folly and knavery; or, which is commonly the case, with these two substances united in one person. People of this make see every thing in a wrong light. They misinterpret from folly, they misrepresent from malice, every well-meant word and deed. They
treat

treat their truest friends as their most inveterate enemies; and load the best men with imputations, which can belong to none but the worst. This happens so very often, that there is hardly a man living, who has not experienced it in some degree: and, as *Calvin* said to *Francis I.* *there would be no such thing as innocence either in words or deeds, if a simple accusation was sufficient to destroy it* (q).

No wonder then, that the *Stoical*, not to say the *Christian*, principle of *doing good* should wax weak and cold with increasing years: no wonder, that so many should, like *Epicurus*, contract their sphere of action, and suffer their happiness to be dependent on none but themselves. Doubtless the great business of a wise man's life is to keep himself, as much as may be, from being teased by fools, and over-reached by knaves: and neither can be done to any purpose, but by avoiding both the one and the other. *Vivez librement & ignoré*, says a Philosopher. *La solitude vous procurera le vrai & unique plaisir*.

(q) *Perpendendum est, nullam neque in dictis, neque in factis innocentiam fore, si accusasse sufficiat.* In *Ded. Institut.* &c.

d'être

d'être toujours content de soi. Les fots & les mechans n'exciteront que votre compassion vûs de loin ; mais vûs de près il faudrait les haïr ou les mépriser (r).

I have heard it said, that more practical knowledge may be drawn by reflection from the dispute between *Messieurs Hume* and *Rousseau*, than from all that either of them hath written. This was said pleasantly. *Mr. Rousseau* is indeed of little use: he may however amuse men of mere imagination, or such as like to contemplate the caprices of the human brain. *Mr. Hume's* writings are a rich and abounding treasury of all that is either useful or entertaining; and may be read with great profit by those, who know how to read them properly. *Mr. Hume* is not without his singularities, most certainly; but they affect not a reader; and I do not find, that he requires even his friends to espouse them. The opinions of men, about

(r) That is, "Live freely and unknown. Solitude will procure you the true and only pleasure of being satisfied with yourself. Fools and knaves, seen at a distance, will only move your compassion; but will force you, when near, to either hate or despise them."

which

which they quarrel most, concern each other least. Every man has, and ever will have, his own; and if difference of opinion is a sufficient cause of quarrelling, no two speculating men can come to an *eclaircissement*, and continue friends.

These, Sir, are a few of my thoughts upon the present dispute between *Mr. Hume* and *Mr. Rousseau*; and yours may probably run in the same train. At least I should imagine so from both your letters (*s*), which are indeed very spirited, very just, and very elegant. I have the honour to be,

S I R,

Your most humble,

and most obedient Servant.

Westminster,
December, 1766.

(*s*) Two letters of *Mr. Walpole's* printed in the *Account of the Dispute*, p. 20. 88.

F I N I S.

well as a very small one, common each other
least. They are small and very light
his own; and the difference of opinion is a far-
distant one of opinion; no two (I
think) ever agreeing to an opinion (I think) and
conclude (I think).

There is a story of my daughter
upon the subject of the difference between Mr. Hume
and Mr. Locke, and you may probably
run in the same line. At least I should
imagine so from the (I think) which
are indeed very different, and very
elegant. I have the honor to be

S I R,

Your most humble

and most obedient servant

William Pitt

December, 1766.

(1) Two letters of Mr. Pitt's printed in the
Account of the Duke, p. 101. &c.

P. 101. &c.

